



Led by Navy Lt. Irvin Gray and Jennifer Manton (both standing), the members of the Relocation and Family Support working group discuss community issues during the Jan. 29 AFAP conference.

Michael Beaton

AFAP 2004

Community conference puts quality of life on center stage

By Hugh C. McBride

Neither white skies nor red roads could deter a contingent of committed community members from gathering on Patch Barracks Jan. 29 to help make the 6th Area Support Group a better place in which to live and work.

Though the day was the latest in a string of snowy ones in Stuttgart – a morning blizzard even prompted the 6th ASG Installation Operations Center to temporarily declare local roads “red,” the highest level of alert – the area’s annual Army Family Action Plan conference went ahead as scheduled in Patch’s Swabian Special Events Center.

“We had great response and attendance,” said Caroline Orama, Stuttgart’s AFAP coordinator. “This was the biggest AFAP I’ve been associated with, and we got a lot of great feedback.”

A worldwide grassroots effort designed to address and remedy quality-of-life concerns in military communities, the AFAP process has brought more than 542 issues to the attention of the Army’s senior leadership since the program’s inception in 1983.

At the Stuttgart conferences, Orama said, issues that fall within the scope of the 6th ASG are assigned to the appropriate directorate for evaluation and follow-up, while recommendations that exceed local authority may be forwarded to AFAP conferences on the regional or Army wide.

To start this process, attendees at Stuttgart’s 2004 AFAP conference were divided into four working groups: Consumer Services, Medical and Dental Services, Relocation Services, and Youth and Education Services.

The groups listed and prioritized quality-of-life concerns within their areas of attention, then crafted concrete, measurable solutions for their top three issues.

AFAP delegate Richard Brown said the opportunity to have his voice heard – and to speak for others who he feels may not always be heard – made the conference a valuable experience for him.

“Senior leadership normally has its input, but it’s the junior service member that is affected,” Brown said. “Any time I can speak for the junior service members and get their opinions across, I’ll be there.”

At the end of the conference, representatives from each working group presented their group’s top issues and suggested remedies to a panel that included 6th ASG Commander Col. Gwendolyn Bonéy-Harris, 6th ASG Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Chavez and 6th ASG Chief of Staff Joseph Moscone.

Moscone said he views AFAP as “a learning ex-

Recommendations from AFAP 2004

Consumer Services

- Improve quality of customer service offered by TKS.
- Ensure all military communities offer consistent euro/dollar exchange rate.
- Alter Patch Commissary operating hours to better meet needs of community members.

Medical & Dental Services

- Expand availability of services at Stuttgart’s medical and dental clinics.
- Establish and promote consistent method of making appointments at both clinics.
- Develop improved means of responding to on-post medical emergencies.

Relocation & Family Support Services

- Establish temporary government lodging for Stuttgart-area families with pets.
- Improve entitlements and support services for Reservists who are deployed for more than 179 days.
- Increase and standardize weight restrictions for household goods of incoming single service members.

Youth & Education Services

- Offer increased late-night social opportunities for teens on post.
- Improve lunch options for students.
- Promote cultural enrichment of students through a program of off-post field trips.

For more about AFAP visit www.stuttgart.army.mil.

Select “Army Community Service” from the “Services” drop-down menu, then click “AFAP” from the list of choices on the left side of the screen.

perience” both for the command group and the community participants. He added that he believes the strength of the program lies in the range of opinions and perspectives it brings together.

“The diversity of the AFAP group represents the entire community – and that’s what makes this program work,” he said.

For Bonéy-Harris, the direct feedback is the key to AFAP’s success. “What better way to find out how our services are meeting the community’s needs than to talk to the people in the community?” she said.

Stuttgart students earn honors for oratorical excellence

By Hugh C. McBride

Two Patch High School students have continued the area’s tradition of oratorical excellence.

Joe Morrow, a 16-year-old junior at Patch High School, received a \$1,000 scholarship and a trip to Washington, D.C., as the winner of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Department of Europe Voice of Democracy competition.

Morrow is the fourth PHS student to win the Europewide competition in the past 10 years.

Morrow’s winning essay on “My Commitment to America’s Future” earned him the opportunity to compete for the national championship and a \$25,000 scholarship.

Also honored was Patch eighth grader Celestine Calhoun, who placed third at the district level in the Patriot’s Pen contest, a writing and speaking competition for seventh- and eighth-grade students.



Morrow



Calhoun